

Concussion Fact Sheet:

Optimize your Recovery from Concussion



What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head, neck and brain to move quickly back and forth. This trauma affects thinking (confusion, feeling "off", or in some cases a brief loss of consciousness) and may also affect the neck and the balance system. Physicians may describe a concussion as a "mild" traumatic brain injury because often no structural injury to the brain is seen.

When should I see a doctor?


If you've seen a physician to diagnose your concussion, that is good. If you haven't and are having symptoms that are bothering you, see a physician as soon as you can. If you have symptoms that persist beyond the first few weeks after injury, rehabilitation treatment may be helpful to treat those issues.

How long does recovery take?

80-90% of people with concussion will be symptom free within a few weeks. A gradual return to usual activities after a short period of rest often helps people recover. If you follow these recommendations, you will maximize your body's ability to heal. If you have physical complaints that are slow to improve, recovery may be aided by physical therapy.

Recommendations to Speed Recovery

Activity




Rest for the first 24-48 hours. Avoid any activities that could put you at risk of additional injury. Talk with your healthcare provider about whether your occupation involves activities that present a risk for another injury. *You may not return to risky occupations until cleared by physician.*

After the first 24-48 hours, try to resume basic usual activities, including your daily routine and if you tolerate that well, school or work. There may be some rehabilitation strategies to assist in re-integration.

After 48 hours, it is okay to start light exercise again. Slowly increase intensity as your symptoms allow.


Consistent Sleep



Maintain scheduled bedtimes and awake times with no naps. Sleeping at night is the time your brain heals and napping inhibits night sleep. 7 to 9 hours of sleep at night is recommended.

Occasionally, people may experience more severe symptoms. If you experience any of the below symptoms, call your physician or go directly to the emergency room: *Headaches that worsen significantly, slurred speech, seizures or loss of consciousness, increasing confusion, inability to awaken, severe neck pain, weakness/numbness in arms/legs, repeated vomiting, &/or unusual behavior changes.*


Manage Stress



Perform some type of relaxation activity daily (ex. Yoga, Mindfulness, Nature walk)

Screen time - Use of computer, phone, or TV for a long time may not be good for you. You can use screen time to minimize stress if symptoms do not worsen. If symptoms worsen, take a break and resume once symptoms improve.

Eat and Hydrate



Eat a normal diet on a regular schedule. Food is fuel for the brain and is needed during this time to help repair itself.

Drink water throughout the day, 2-3 (16-24oz) bottles of water/day.

Do not drink alcohol. This may delay your brain's healing & cause a resurgence of symptoms.

For more information:

Evidence Based Clinical Practice Guideline:
Physical Therapy Evaluation and Treatment
After Concussion/ Mild Traumatic Brain Injury

<https://www.jospt.org/doi/pdf/10.2519/jospt.2020.0301>

